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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4519  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RUEHIHL/REO HILLAH 2095  
RUEHBC/REO BASRAH 2127  
RUEHKUK/REO KIRKUK 2096  
RUEHMOS/REO MOSUL 2098  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUZCDAB/MNC-I BAGHDAD IQ  
RUZCDAA/MNF-I BAGHDAD IQ  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001645

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: BAGHDAD REGIONAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN ALLEGES FATWA BY  
SADR SPOKESMAN CALLING FOR DEATHS OF SUNNI COUNCIL MEMBERS

Classified By: PRT BAGHDAD DEPUTY TEAM LEADER COL KEN FISHER FOR REASON  
S 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Baghdad Regional Council (BRC) Chairman Khadem Al-Shamary told PRT Baghdad PolOff this afternoon that Abdulhadi Al-Haraji, allegedly a spokesman for Moqtada Al-Sadr, issued a fatwa on 16 May ordering the deaths of Mr. Al-Shamary and the remaining Sunni members of the BRC. According to Mr. Al-Shamary, the fatwa accused Regional Council members of 1) 'collaborating with the Americans' as well as 2) 'ridiculing the Shia'. Mr. Al-Shamary, a politically independent Shia himself, believes that the second charge refers to outspoken comments against JAM and other militias made by several BRC members including Al-Shamary.

¶2. (C) Al-Shamary stated that he contacted both Baghdad Provincial Council Chairman Mueen Hameed and Deputy Governor Qassem Namah shortly after hearing the news May 16. Al-Shamary explained that Mueen said that he would work on this issue through Deputy Chairman Mohan, as well as with Deputy Governor Qassem. Both are prominent Sadrists in Baghdad provincial government. Allegedly, Chairman Mueen called Mr. Al-Shamary at about 22:00 that day and said he believed that 'the case had been closed' by Al-Haraji, but that he should 'not trust anyone' as the order for the fatwa had already been distributed to Jaysh al-Mahdi offices in Rusafa, Khark, and Sadr City and could not be easily recalled. He also explained that Al-Haraji said he 'may have been confused' about Mr. Al-Shamary's ethnicity, and that he has accepted the word of DG Qassem, barring any new evidence. The fatwa remains in effect concerning the remaining Sunni BRC members, according to Al-Shamary.

¶3. (C) Mr. Al-Shamary is now in hiding, and fears that his family, still resident in Mada'in, may also be targeted. He believes that OMS/JAM is trying to remove him and the other politically independent members of the BRC as part of a campaign to extend their political control in the qadas outside central Baghdad. Seven Sunni members of the original council have been killed and another ten have fled Iraq since the council's formation. (Comment: Mr. Al-Shamary has been a reliable and forthcoming Embassy contact for several years. PRT Baghdad has not yet corroborated the details provided with PC Chairman Mueen at the request of Mr. Al-Shamary, who expressed concerns that direct US engagement with provincial leadership on this matter may further compromise his safety.)  
KHALILZAD